

Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

MINUTES

A meeting of the **Corporate Governance Committee** was held on Tuesday 8th June 2010 in the Conference Room, Devon and Cornwall Police Authority, Endeavour House, Woodwater Park, Exeter, starting at 10:30hrs.

Present:

Chairman Ms J Norton
Vice Chairman Mrs L Williams
Members: Mr J Hart, Mrs L Price, Lady Stanhope.

Officers in attendance:

Police Authority
Mr S Barrett (Interim Authority Treasurer), Mrs G Clifton (Administrator), Miss J Norris (Assistant Chief Executive), Mr E Wardle (Head of Audit).

Constabulary:

Mr D Boffin (Change Transition Manager) - part, Ms S Goscomb (Director of Finance and Resources), Ms A Poole (Head of Performance Analysis), DCC S Sawyer.

Devon Audit Partnership:

Mr A Morris (Senior Auditor) - part, Mr N Roper (Audit Manager)

Audit Commission:

Mr M Bartlett (Audit Manager) - part.

CG/292 Chairman's Announcements

- The Statement of Accounts review scheduled for 18th June 2010 would now take place on 17th June.
- Apologies for the lateness of some of the papers for the meeting.

CG/293 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J Owen and Ms J Zito.

CG/294 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any item on the agenda.

CG/295 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

Matters arising:

CG/287 – the draft indemnity policy had not yet been completed due to a delay in receiving responses from Chief Executives in the region. This would be followed up for the next meeting of this Committee.

CG/296 Risk Maturity Survey Results

The Head of Internal Audit presented this item that provided information about perceptions and the reality of the Authority's risk management arrangements using a model adapted from the financial services sector. Devon and Cornwall Police had been invited to participate in the benchmarking of risk maturity for the four

attributes – culture, process, experience and application. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Force consistently scored risk maturity lower than the Police Authority. There was some confusion however in that the respondents from the Force thought they were scoring Devon and Cornwall Police Service rather than the Police Authority. The exercise would be repeated with a larger group of people from the Force and, in addition, the Police Authority would score risk maturity in Devon and Cornwall Police.

RESOLVED that the risk maturity survey would be repeated and the results brought back to this Committee.

CG/297 Assurance Mapping

The Head of Audit presented the item that provided information about the technique of assurance mapping and how it could support the work of Corporate Governance. Assurance mapping is intended to give a picture of where an organisation can derive assurance from management based activities. It enables identification of areas where there may be under or over assurance, enabling informed decision making regarding the allocation of resources.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The choice of colours made the map difficult to read, this would be addressed.
- The intention was to harmonise the map with the annual review of assurance and to inform the Annual Assurance Statement for 2010/11.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Committee supported the assurance mapping approach and
- (ii) that an Assurance Map be developed and used to inform the Annual Assurance Statement in future years .

CG/298 Internal Audit Annual Report

The Head of Audit introduced the report providing a summary of the work undertaken to complete the Annual Internal Audit Plan. The points highlighted included:

- The devolvement of specific risks on the Risk Register to the relevant committees is a positive step in risk management.
- The failure of the competitive dialogue for the ICT procurement could be seen as effective risk management demonstrating an increasing risk maturity.
- The in-house tracking system developed for seized property should provide a more effective and efficient mechanism for seized monies than the existing manual system. A post implementation review would be carried out once the system is bedded-in.
- The National Fraud Initiative is substantially complete but there are some outstanding benefit queries; the financial impact on the revenue budget of any findings resulting from the initiative will be reported to the Resources Committee.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The suspense account that held monies seized from crime was examined quarterly. The write offs identified in 2009/10 (approx £33,000) were not considered material.
- Recommendations regarding action required by the Force resulting from audit reports are entered on the organisational learning database and can only be discharged by the Recommendation Closure Group which is attended by the Head of Audit.
- The Risk Task & Finish Group will be kept updated regarding the procurement and implementation of new risk and performance monitoring software for the Authority.

RESOLVED

- (i) to note the report

(ii) the Risk Task & Finish Group to report back to the Committee on the implementation of the new risk monitoring software.

(Mr A Morris, from Devon Audit Partnership, left the meeting)

CG/299 Audit Commission – Audit Progress Summary

The Audit Commission Audit Manager introduced the report that provided information on current Audit Commission work pertinent to the Police Authority.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The newly elected Government had announced that Comprehensive Area Assessments (CAA) and Use of Resources assessments were to be abolished.
- Members of the the Corporate Governance Committee had been sent the Audit Commission publication “Nothing but the Truth”; there was now a follow-up publication “The Truth is Out There” which would be sent to the Committee in due course.
- The ongoing work to produce an effective long term Strategic Plan for the Authority.
- The South West Police Authority Joint Committee was examining joint procurement options.
- The Audit Commission was in discussion with HMIC and the Home Office on the future of Police Authority inspections.

RESOLVED to note the report

CG/300 Audit Commission – Annual Audit Fee

The Audit Commission had intended to provide details of the fee for 2010-11. The calculation of the fee had been done to include Comprehensive Areas Assessments and Use of Resources, as these had recently been abolished by the Government the 2010-11 fees were being recalculated and were not yet available. All public bodies were in the same position and the Commission would inform the Interim Treasurer of the fee as soon as possible.

RESOLVED to note the report

CG/301 Annual Assurance Statement

The Director of Finance and Resources introduced the item. The Statement had been completed having reviewed the governance systems in place within the Constabulary. Comments made by the Corporate Governance Committee at the meeting on 4th March 2010 had been included in the final document. There had been no substantive changes other than including a reference to the in-year cut in budget imposed by the Government. The Annual Assurance Statement is a supporting document for the annual Governance Statement.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Some minor amendments to the statement were suggested by the Committee.
- Complaints from the public about the police were reviewed by the Professional Standards and Complaints Monitoring Working Group. The group holds quarterly meetings, receives reports and carries out dip sampling of complaints. The mechanism of how this information is fed back to the Police Authority would form part of the committee structure review following the creation of the Strategic Plan.
- The completion by all staff of the e-learning package introduced following the Health & Safety Executive’s 2007-08 inspection was monitored by COG. The Human Resources Committee should have oversight of this.
- The Committee felt that there could be a better way of managing assurance throughout the year rather than just annually. For example, the Organisational Learning Database had not been working to plan initially with lack of closure that had now been addressed. The Committee would consider a new approach to managing assurance for the coming year.

RESOLVED to receive the report

CG/302 Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report. The Authority is required to undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of internal audit as part of the Annual Governance Statement. This year the review incorporated information from user surveys and a statement from the Interim Treasurer. The user survey had moved to a continuous basis using an electronic questionnaire format which was generally working well but some refinements would be made during 2010/11 particularly regarding following up non-respondents. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Audit Commission used to carry out a three-yearly review of internal audit but this was going to change to an approach based on assessment of risk regarding the audit function.
- Checklist and matrix tools had been identified which would assist in the assessment of Internal Audit effectiveness and its contribution to corporate governance. Use of the tools will be developed during the current financial year.
- In preparing his statement The Interim Treasurer had considered such key issues as resilience, isolation and succession planning and found that the generally the current arrangements were sound. The Authority's Delivery Plan should include consideration of ways to reduce the issues of resilience and isolation, in addition some best practice initiatives such as external peer review need to be addressed. The Interim Treasurer also suggested that when the new strategic plan is adopted internal audit should have an important role in the related risk management regime.

- RESOLVED**
- (i) that the continuous survey method of audit service recipients is continued and follow-up of non-responses is improved;
 - (ii) that a paper be brought to the next meeting on how future reviews of Internal Audit should be conducted;
 - (iii) that the Committee considers the Internal Audit service is effective.

CG/303 Annual Governance Statement

The Assistant Chief Executive introduced the statement for approval. The Statement is a statutory requirement and explains how the Authority has complied with the Code of Corporate Governance and meets the regulation 4(2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The Chairs' Committee is not webcast although the agenda, reports and minutes of the open part of the meeting are available to the public
- The evidence available to demonstrate how the Authority communicates with communities
- The Member appraisals offered to all Members by the Authority Chairman had been an improvement on previous schemes
- The wording regarding partnership working needs to be changed as it suggests the Police Authority is reluctant to form partnerships .
- Assurance mapping should be included in the 2010-11 and beyond workplan as a separate item.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the principles contained within the Annual Governance Statement are endorsed and
- (ii) delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive following consultation with the Committee Chair to make minor adjustments to the Statement in line with the Committee's discussions.

CG/304 Constitution Review

The Authority's constitution states "The Authority's Corporate Governance Committee will monitor and review the operation of the Constitution to ensure that the aims and principles of the Constitution are given full effect". The report outlined the work of a small review group and presented a draft document for consideration. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- The group had met on one occasion and concentrated their efforts on the purpose of the Constitution and a gap analysis.
- Initial work had been done to review the Constitution Articles. Further work was needed on other constitutional documents such as the Standing Orders - this would be done to complement adoption of a new strategic plan and the decision making structure review.
- It was intended to reduce the number of appendices and move towards operational guidance, which would be more dynamic.
- It would not be possible to sign off the Constitution at the Annual General Meeting because of the proposed changes to the committee structure.
- Any legal changes introduced by the new Government would be delegated to the Chief Executive and would not have to come to this Committee.
- A short presentation about the review had been given at the Police Authority seminar on 4th June

RESOLVED that the amended Constitution be brought to the September meeting of the Committee to agree recommendations for the full Police Authority meeting in September.

CG/305 Scrutiny of Force Projects

The Chairs' Committee had resolved to refer the Authority involvement and scrutiny in Force projects to the Corporate Governance Committee for further consideration. The report provided an opportunity for the Committee to consider the Authority's oversight and scrutiny role regarding Force projects and equality impact audits and assessments. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Concerns had been raised at a recent seminar that the Police Authority was unaware of certain Force projects. A mechanism was needed to improve communication when projects are undertaken to enable the Authority to perform some scrutiny.
- The Diversity and Equality Working Group had agreed to take on responsibility for Equality audit and impact assessments.
- There were many different projects being undertaken. The Force agreed to provide a list projects with their terms of reference and how the list impacted on the Risk Register.
- A draft memorandum of understanding and matrix of options for project scrutiny would be brought to the next meeting.

RESOLVED (i) that a further paper on Scrutiny of Force projects be brought to the next meeting;
(ii) that the Diversity and Equality Working Group ensures that important Equality audit and impact assessments are undertaken by the Force in a proportional manner and that appropriate related actions are implemented.

CG/306 Force Risk Register

The Head of Performance Analysis introduced the item. Devon and Cornwall produces a Corporate Risk Register on a quarterly basis. The current register was produced in March 2010. This version of the register did not include changes to the budget following the Government cuts. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- It would be helpful to review the cycle of Police Authority meetings to fit in with the production of the Force Risk Register. The priority, however, was that the process resulted in action being taken by the Force.
- New risks added included an increase in the risk of the financial position due to the budget cuts and access to specialist skills.
- For future meetings if members had any queries about the Register they should inform the Committee Chair who would raise it with the Force before the meeting. This would allow a response at the meeting in the closed session.
- The timing of the risk register reviews and the Corporate Governance Committee meetings is not well synchronised and ways of addressing this need to be investigated

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Committee received and noted the content of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary’s Corporate Risk Register
- (ii) that specific queries regarding the Register would be discussed in the closed session.

(Mr M Bartlett left the meeting. Mr D Boffin joined the meeting.)

CG/307 Authority Risk Register

The Officer Risk Review Group had met to review the Authority’s Risk Register and agreed some changes which were highlighted in the report.

RESOLVED to note the key updates to the Authority’s Risk Register as indicated in the report.

CG/308 Consideration to Excluding the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the agenda item detailed in the table below be considered as a closed item.

Agenda item no.	Report Title	Relevant Act	Relevant Section
18	ICT Service Management Department Update Report for ICT Service Management Department Business Continuity Planning	Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information Act 1985)	Schedule 12A Paragraph 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

CG/309 ICT Service Management Department Update Report for ICT Service Management Department Business Continuity Planning

The Change Transition Manager introduced the report. In 2009 the Police Authority commissioned an internal audit of the Business Continuity Planning processes and activities within the Force ICT Service Management Department. The report recommendations were agreed by the Force for progression. An action plan has been drawn up and is reported on a regular basis within the Force Organisation Learning Database. The report provided an update of the actions taken to implement the recommendations. Issues discussed during consideration of this item included:

- Business continuity now formed part of the project specification in the procurement process.
- All critical systems should have disaster recovery plans. The ICT Department provides disaster recovery but it was the responsibility of the BCUs to identify what the critical systems are. The Force agreed to provide details of the testing regime.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

CG/310 Force Risk Register

Issues raised by the Committee regarding the Force Risk Register included:

- CRR33 - The Devon Strategic Partnership was working closely with all parties to get better value particularly with the blue light services.
- CRR48 – an organisation in Devon “Multilingual” had access to over 37 different languages. There was not such a need for high quality interpretation when talking to victims as there was required for the Criminal Justice System.
- The number of risks had fallen from 302 to 249 with 72 classified as high risk compared to 93 previously. There were no new risks and the top four had remained unchanged. However, the recent cuts in budget might have an impact on the register.
- The Risk Task and Finish Group would look at aligning the Police Authority and Force Risk Registers and discuss areas that are not being scrutinised. Any member of the Corporate Governance Committee could attend.
- Although the Interim Treasurer had agreed to stay on until July the lack of stability in the post was a high risk.

The meeting closed at 13.25 hrs